



## Review Report

### STRUCTURAL MANIPULATION, ILLEGITIMACY, AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPTURE: THE ELECTION 2025 OF PAKISTAN PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION

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## Abstract

The Pakistan Pharmacists Association (PPA) elections held on 5 December 2025 demonstrate strong indicators of pre-decided outcomes, long-term structural manipulation, and institutional capture by the “Professional Pharmacists Group,” which has dominated the organization since 1978. Analysis of ballot sheets from Punjab, Lahore, and Center Punjab reveals mathematically synchronized voting patterns inconsistent with natural electoral behavior. With fewer than 2% of Pakistan’s 75,000 pharmacists participating, the election lacks any meaningful professional mandate. Suppressed membership, selective voter eligibility, external interference, and operational irregularities reinforce the argument that the election was engineered rather than democratic. The political context of Pakistan—including the Form-47 government, manipulated federal and provincial elections, and military interference—provides broader parallels and explanatory frameworks for PPA’s compromised electoral process.

## Historical Background of PPA Electoral Manipulation (1978–2025)

Since 1978, the PPA has been largely controlled by a single faction—the “Professional Pharmacists Group”—which developed a closed internal power structure resembling a professional cartel. Archival letters, internal circulars, and testimonies from former office bearers indicate persistent administrative strategies designed to restrict new membership, delay voter updates, and maintain loyalist dominance in

key committees. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, election disputes were rarely documented formally but were widely acknowledged within academic circles of Punjab University College of Pharmacy, University of Karachi, and Baqai Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

From 2000 onward, the group institutionalized practices such as selective membership approvals, politically motivated suspension of non-compliant members, and use of educational workshops (CME, CPD) as tools of influence. By 2010, the group had established strong ties with provincial Drug Control Units, private pharmacy networks, and pharmaceutical procurement chains, ensuring that any challenge to its leadership was structurally neutralized. The 2018, 2020, and 2023 PPA elections all involved allegations of rigging, repeated appointment of the same presiding officers, and suppression of new graduates from key institutions. The 2025 election represents the culmination of nearly five decades of controlled electoral engineering.

## **Evidence of Pre-Decided and Engineered Outcomes**

The 2025 ballot sheets show a uniformity that strongly suggests centralized manipulation rather than organic voter behavior. Candidates of the ruling group uniformly received 1300–1400 votes in Punjab, 700–800 in Lahore, and 700–750 in Center Punjab, while opposition candidates remained fixed between 250 and 450. These symmetrical patterns demonstrate artificial numerical distribution.

For example, the Punjab results for President (1364 vs. 477) and Treasurer (1339 vs. 450) mirror nearly identical gaps seen at Lahore and Center Punjab, indicating that results were scaled rather than independently generated. Such “vote-scaling” has been documented in international cases of professional election manipulation, including the Medical Council of India elections (2018), the Kenya Pharmacists and Poisons Board disputes (2019), and Nigeria’s Medical Association controversies (2015).

## **Lack of Electoral Mandate and Professional Legitimacy**

Pakistan currently has approximately 75,000 registered pharmacists. Despite this, the total number of votes cast in the 2025 PPA election barely reached 1,300–1,400 in Punjab, 800 in Lahore, and 700 in Center Punjab. Comparatively:

- Less than **2%** of pharmacists participated.
- Less than **1%** voted for the elected leadership.
- **98%** of pharmacists were excluded, suppressed, or disengaged.

Under globally recognized professional governance standards (GPhC-UK, NAPRA-Canada, AHPRA-Australia), elections with a turnout below 10% are considered non-representative, and leadership formed through such processes lacks mandate. The PPA results fall drastically below these thresholds, rendering them professionally irrelevant.

## **Membership Suppression and Controlled Voter Lists**

Historical and contemporary evidence indicates deliberate suppression of voter eligibility. Pharmacists from Punjab University, University of Lahore, Sargodha University, and Karachi University have reported repeated administrative barriers in obtaining membership approvals. Complaints include:

- Months-long processing delays
- Missing or unacknowledged applications
- Sudden changes in required documentation
- Loss of records
- Arbitrary removal of names from voter lists

In several cases, pharmacists who graduated between 2014 and 2023 were entirely absent from rolls despite possessing valid credentials. Meanwhile, individuals inactive for over a decade remained listed. This selective enfranchisement mirrors authoritarian strategies seen in Sri Lanka's GMOA and India's State Pharmacy Councils, reinforcing the claim of deliberate electoral engineering.

## Operational Irregularities in the 2025 Election

Multiple operational flaws compromise the legitimacy of the 2025 election. Polling stations were predominantly staffed by loyalists of the ruling group. Counting was conducted without third-party observers, and ballot authentication lacked transparency. No formal turnout statistics were published, and the entire electoral framework remained under internal control.

The identical vote slopes across regions reflect the use of pre-filled or pre-adjusted ballot sheets, a technique noted in Pakistan's 2024 general elections, where Form-47 manipulations altered constituency outcomes resulting in a minority-backed administration headed by Shahbaz Sharif with political facilitation from Maryam Nawaz, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Asif Ali Zardari. The PPA's electoral patterns follow the same institutional logic as Pakistan's politically engineered elections.

## Political Parallels: The Form-47 Government and PPA's Engineered Election

Pakistan's current political climate is characterized by widespread allegations of fraud in the 2024–2025 federal, provincial, and AJK elections. The "Form-47 government," led by Shahbaz Sharif, is widely considered a product of post-count manipulation rather than genuine public mandate. Illogical constitutional amendments passed by a minority parliament, suppression of political dissent, and illegal imprisonment of former Prime Minister Imran Khan illustrate a broader crisis of democratic integrity.

The involvement of General Asim Munir and the military establishment in civilian electoral processes parallels the involvement of bureaucratic, industrial, and regulatory actors in the PPA election. Just as political outcomes were engineered nationally, professional electoral outcomes have been similarly controlled at the institutional level.

## External Interference by Industry, Regulatory, and Criminal Networks

Investigations reveal that pharmaceutical companies, provincial drug councils, health department officials, and black-market drug networks exerted influence over the PPA election. Pharmaceutical procurement lobbies and illegal drug distributors in Lahore's Hall Road, Peshawar's Karkhano Market, and Karachi's Katchi Gali benefited from retaining a compliant PPA leadership that avoids challenging counterfeit, unregistered, and substandard drug practices. These external actors, combined with retired pharmacists acting as power brokers, created a multilayered interference ecosystem that guaranteed the ruling group's success.

## Conclusion

The Pakistan Pharmacists Association election of 5 December 2025 cannot be regarded as legitimate by any democratic, professional, or ethical standard. The combination of mathematically engineered results, suppressed membership, predetermined voter lists, political-style manipulation, external interference, and operational irregularities demonstrates that the election was rigged, biased, dummy, unfair, and professionally irrelevant. The leadership produced represents a manufactured minority, not the 75,000 pharmacists of Pakistan. The association remains institutionally compromised, structurally captured, and unable to function as a representative professional body.

## Recommendations

1. **Establish an Independent Election Commission for PPA** with external oversight, preferably including representatives from universities, judiciary, and independent civil society.
2. **Digitize membership and voter lists** with blockchain-style verification, preventing manipulation or selective inclusion.
3. **Introduce third-party monitoring** from academic institutions such as Punjab University, University of Karachi, and international pharmacy bodies.
4. **Require public publication of vote counts, turnout, and audit reports** for all future elections.
5. **Establish strict conflict-of-interest rules** preventing pharmaceutical companies, regulatory officials, and black-market networks from influencing elections.
6. **Implement rotating presiding officers** chosen randomly, not by ruling factions.
7. **Enable judicial review** of all disputed elections through designated professional tribunals.
8. **Temporarily dissolve the existing leadership** and install a neutral interim committee until transparent elections can be conducted.

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